



Research Approach

Conditions for Flourishing After Menopause is an independent qualitative research enquiry exploring women's experiences of life after menopause and, in particular, the conditions that enable or constrain flourishing.

The research is being undertaken by **Louise Marlena Tarrier** through She Changes and will primarily inform a forthcoming book and wider public enquiry into postmenopausal life, women's development, ageing, elderhood and contribution.

At the centre of the research is one question:

How do women describe the conditions that enable or constrain flourishing in life after menopause?

Why this research?

Much existing menopause research has understandably concentrated on symptoms, health risks, quality of life, sexual health and workplace experiences.

These are important. But they do not tell us everything about what happens in the decades after menopause.

Emerging research suggests that wellbeing during and after menopause is shaped by much more than menopausal stage alone. Physical health, sleep, financial circumstances, relationships, social support, attitudes towards ageing, resilience, purpose and the wider context of a woman's life may all matter.

There is considerably less research into questions such as creativity, contribution, cultural authority, elderhood, belonging, relationship with place and what enables women to feel fully alive and able to participate in life.

This research therefore begins from a broader proposition:

Flourishing after menopause may not simply be an individual psychological state or the absence of symptoms. It may be made more or less possible by the conditions surrounding a woman, bodily, relational, material, cultural and environmental.

The research is designed to test, deepen and challenge that idea through women's lived experience rather than to assume it is correct.



What are we exploring?

Interviews consider experiences including:

- bodily wellbeing, energy, sleep and health;
- identity and changing understandings of self;
- agency, confidence, boundaries and freedom;
- relationships and belonging;
- work, money and material circumstances;
- ageing and cultural expectations;
- creativity, purpose and contribution;
- leadership and community participation;
- sexuality and intimacy where relevant;
- spirituality, nature, place and meaning;
- what supports flourishing and what makes it difficult;
- what women wish had been available to them before, during or after menopause.

Importantly, women taking part do **not** need to consider themselves flourishing. The research seeks a wide range of experiences, including ambivalence, difficulty, transition and uncertainty.

How is the research being conducted?

The study uses **semi-structured qualitative interviews** with approximately 15–18 postmenopausal women. Questions are prompts, but the interview flows with what the women wish to talk about rather than covering all subjects.

Participants are being recruited purposively to create variation in age, years since menopause, health, financial circumstances, work, caring responsibilities, relationships, culture, geography and current experience of postmenopausal life. The study includes women from the UK, the USA, Australia and Canada.

Interviews normally last between 60 and 90 minutes and are conversational in style.

Analysis begins inductively: themes are developed first from the language, stories and meanings offered by participants rather than fitting interviews immediately into an existing theory.

Only later will emerging themes be compared with the wider literature and the provisional framework of conditions for flourishing.



This allows the research to identify experiences that support the existing framework while also paying close attention to contradictions, surprises and experiences that do not fit it.

Researcher position

As a postmenopausal woman with an existing intellectual and personal interest in menopause, women's transitions, elderhood, ecology and flourishing, Louise is not positioned as a detached observer.

That brings both insight and potential bias.

A reflexive research journal is therefore being kept throughout the project to document assumptions, emotional responses, emerging interpretations and moments where the researcher's own perspective may be influencing the enquiry.

Independent critical friends with relevant research and participant-support experience will also be invited to review aspects of the work and challenge potential blind spots.

Ethics and participant care

This is independent research and is not affiliated with a university, NHS body or clinical institution.

A documented independent ethics process has therefore been developed using established UK social-research principles.

Participants receive detailed information before taking part and provide informed consent. Participation is voluntary, questions may be declined, and interviews may be paused or stopped at any time.

Pseudonymisation is the default. Identifying information is separated from research transcripts, and personal data is stored securely.

The project may involve sensitive experiences including health, sexuality, bereavement, financial insecurity, discrimination or difficult experiences of menopause. Interviews are conducted in a trauma-aware manner and are not intended to provide therapy, medical advice or clinical support.

Identifiable participant data will not be uploaded to general-purpose AI systems.



What will happen to the research?

The primary purpose of the study is to inform a book exploring the conditions for flourishing after menopause.

The research may also contribute to:

- essays and Research Notes;
- talks and public conversations;
- workshops and gatherings;
- future research proposals;
- collaborations with researchers and organisations;
- development of a wider conditions-based framework for postmenopausal flourishing.

Findings will be presented carefully and proportionately. A small qualitative study cannot represent the experiences of all postmenopausal women.

Instead, the aim is to listen deeply, identify recurring patterns and differences, and contribute richer questions to the conversation about women's lives beyond menopause.

The enquiry asks not only what women experience during menopause, but what becomes possible afterwards and what conditions women need to flourish in the decades that follow.